

Equal Opportunity Recession?

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Is this an equal opportunity recession? Up to this point, no. This recession is not treating males and females equally—but that's really nothing new. Most recessions hit the male labor force harder than the female.

When we say hit we mean job losses. When you look back across recessions, it doesn't seem to matter in what industry or sector the spark originated, the fire always significantly makes its way into the goods-producing sector. That area largely consists of construction and manufacturing, and those are industries dominated by male workers. Therefore, within every recession, the male-dominated industries suffer a heavy proportion of job loss.

This isn't to say that females aren't losing jobs. They are, because this is

such an extensive downturn that it is affecting most industry sectors. But the big job losses to date are occurring in construction and manufacturing. Together, those industries dropped 24,000 jobs in Utah across the 12 months ending in February 2009. All remaining sectors lost a cumulative 1,500 jobs.

In addition to construction and manufacturing, males also are heavily prevalent in wholesale trade, and the transportation and warehousing industries.

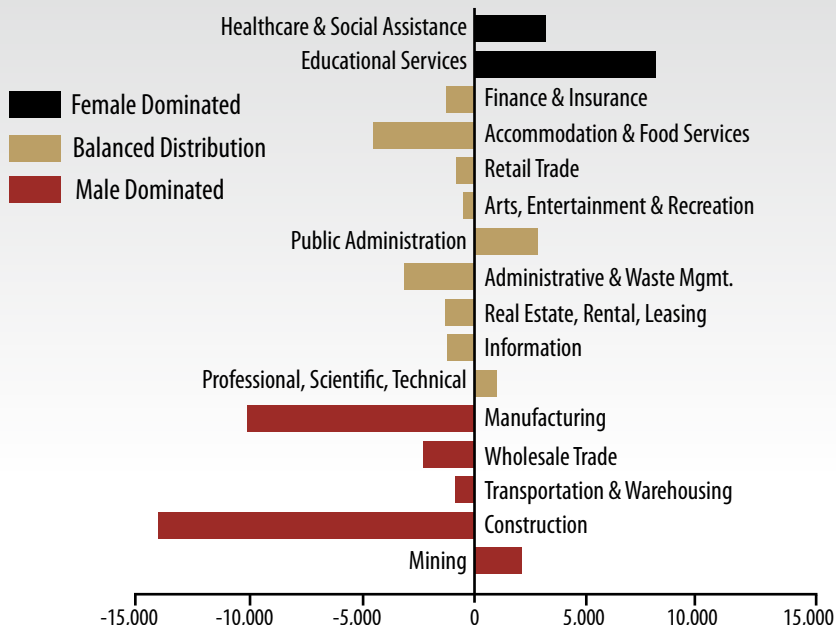
Females have industries they dominate—particularly educational services, and healthcare. They also happen to be the two industries least negatively affected by this downturn. That is the major reason why this downturn is hitting the male workforce more

forcefully than the female workforce. The two strongest female industries are the two least-impacted industries. These industries are also less sensitive to economic change.

People's health issues and the need to educate the young do not take a vacation during bad economic times. The demand for those services remains high.

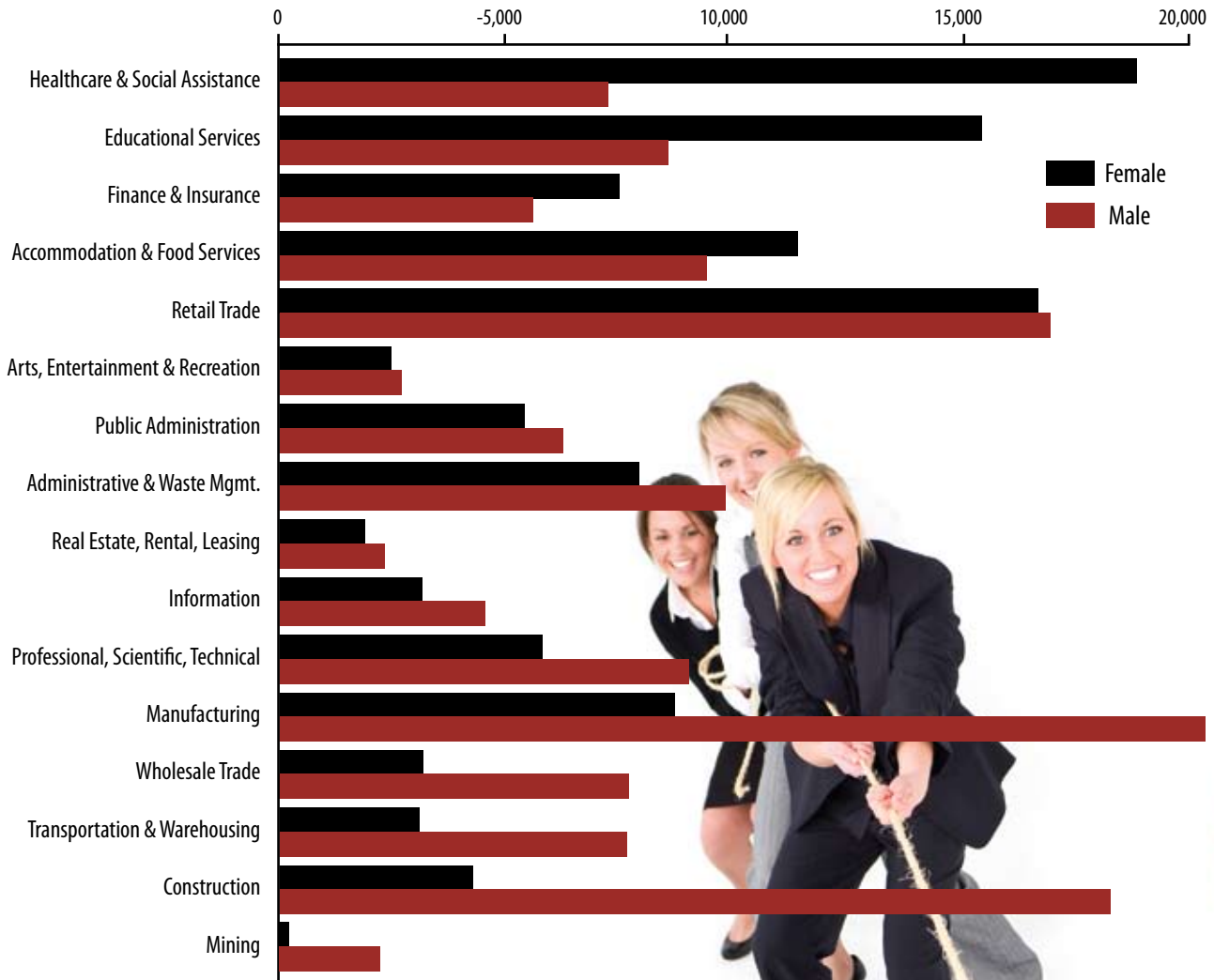
Most of the remaining industry sectors have a more even structure between male and female employment, so the remaining job losses are more equally balanced between men and women. Industries where females also have a sizeable (but largely equal) employment presence include retail trade, accommodation and food services, and administrative support. ①

Utah Employment Change By Industry
February 2007-2008



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Utah Employment: Gender By Industry 2007



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics.

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